



Housing Now Strategy Framework | 2025

This strategy provides a framework for how the LSCP will work to facilitate additional housing opportunities throughout Marquette County. While accurate at the time of adoption, the situation and associated tools are evolving quickly and the LSCP may pursue additional strategies or determine that an existing strategy within this framework is no longer applicable.

BACKGROUND

In 2023, the LSCP Board of Directors adopted its first strategic framework for housing. Strategic frameworks are concise, action-focused documents that establish a clear position/vision and actions to achieve that vision. The 2023 framework guided the LSCP's work on housing throughout 2024, including completion of the Target Market Analysis (alongside key partners), securing two keynote speakers from downstate to share their strategies, building a comprehensive housing resource online (Marquette.org/housing), expanding communication on housing needs, expanding emerging developer support, and more. Bridging the work of the LSCP and partners near the end of the year was the formation of a new private-public initiative – *Housing Now* – hosted by the LSCP Foundation. Housing Now replaced the existing Intergovernmental Housing Taskforce as an opportunity to recognize the work public sector partners had done but creating an opening for additional private sector involvement.

This 2025 strategy is an update to the version adopted in 2023. It has been reorganized from six goals to eight focus areas, in some areas expanding efforts (such as education) and streamlining or reducing others. This strategy will guide the work of the Housing Now initiative, including accessing funds from the LSCP Foundation's Housing Acceleration Fund, a new fund set up specifically to support housing-related work.

LSCP/HOUSING NOW POSITION STATEMENT ON HOUSING





The Lake Superior Community Partnership, via the Housing Now initiative, recognizes the importance of a diversified housing ecosystem that provides sufficient housing opportunity for residents of all incomes and stages in life to ensure a stable workforce.

In the past decade, new housing development has fallen well behind historic trends, creating a shortage of housing options. This was amplified by the 2020 pandemic which has increased the demand for housing in rural communities offering a high quality of life and access to recreational assets, such as Marquette County. Housing shortages have also been amplified by an increase in short-term rentals which generally provide a higher return on investment. The LSCP also recognizes that new development is facing historically high material costs, outdated regulatory processes, a shortage of skilled trades workers, and cash flow challenges. This increased demand and constrained supply has led to historic increases in pricing, placing the average home in many parts of the county out of reach of a family making the median income. This, in turn, is having an impact on our area's ability to retain and attract new workers to the area. Given our area's attractiveness from a low risk of major climate disaster potential, demand is only expected to grow.

We believe a healthy market consists of all types and price points including single family, missing middle, apartments, condos, and more. The LSCP is encouraged by a significant pipeline of potential housing projects in the county and new tools coming online through state and federal resources. In collaboration with its partners, LSCP, through Housing Now, will take a leadership role in facilitating the local conversation and encouraging new development through a variety of methods to add to this existing pipeline.

OUR FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIES


We believe Housing Now can directly help address the housing shortage in seven ways, outlined below. Key to the success of these strategies is the ability to be nimble and identify where specific partners may be better equipped to complete some tasks. Overall, Housing Now's main focus will be leveraging its ability to bring partners together and facilitate the sharing of ideas and resources; however, we do believe there are specific actions Housing Now can take to complement those efforts. This strategy intentionally does not include timelines due to limited resources, but does include a status column to show ongoing, complete, in-progress, and inactive tasks as a way of measuring progress.

Ongoing	
Complete	
In Progress	
Not Started	

DATA








Data is a powerful tool for advancing housing development. From initial market data to building and demographic data, all stakeholders have more productive conversations with up-to-date data. Housing Now will seek to collect, maintain, and distribute up-to-date, accurate data to inform new housing projects, policies, and conversations.

Action	Status
Maintain a list of known and future housing developments throughout Marquette County	
Create a data clearinghouse on Housing Now's website to allow easy access to data	
Share outcomes of the Marquette County Target Market Analysis, including summaries and deeper analysis, throughout the year	

EDUCATION



Housing is a complex issue that is prone to misinformation. Housing Now will invest in resources to provide timely information and insight on housing development, workforce needs, and policy options that counter incorrect claims and drive a positive conversation toward "Yes in my backyard."

Action	Status
Launch and maintain a Housing Now website (www.housingnow906.org)	
Launch and maintain Housing Now social channels to actively interact and engage the public	
Develop graphics and other marketing materials for use by partners and Housing Now	
Engage in ongoing media interviews on housing needs and updates in Marquette County	
Provide presentations to groups interested in Housing Now's work	

POLICY



While housing will be built by private developers, existing policies at the local, state, and federal level have a major impact on the timeline and cost of housing development as well as the tools

available to invest in projects. Housing Now will work with local, state, and federal officials to advocate for essential policies that unlock the potential for more housing.

Action	Status
Maintain an active list of legislation and proposed policy changes at the local, state, and federal levels.	
Develop and propose policy changes to further Housing Now's mission	
Engage with legislators and state/federal department staff throughout the year to communicate the impact of existing policies on Marquette County housing goals	
Provide legislative updates on Housing Now's communication channels, soliciting broader community support	
Engage with other legislative or policy coalitions focused on housing issues	
Attend Housing-related events such as conferences, online workshops, etc. to build networks	



REGULATION

Direct regulation such as zoning and coding codes can add as much as 30% to the cost of housing development, especially if delays occur. To reduce this impact, Housing Now will work with local, state, and federal partners to ensure streamlined approval and permitting processes.

Action	Status
Complete the Housing Ready Checklist for any interested community in Marquette County	
Encourage communities to pursue Redevelopment Ready Communities® certification	
Index Marquette County in the MI Zoning Atlas	
Encourage zoning ordinances to include by-right approval for many types of housing	
Collect feedback from developers on their experience to identify potential enhancements	
Work with all levels of government to incorporate and maintain best practices which promote a collaborative and proactive regulatory environment	
Pilot the feasibility of locally-designed pre-approved building plans for small scale housing projects (i.e. "pattern books") in at least one community	



EMERGING DEVELOPER SUPPORT

Housing Now recognizes the impact and importance of local and small-scale developers in moving the needle on our housing goals. In recognition of their role, Housing Now will actively promote connections and support for local developers throughout the county to foster increased capacity and collaboration.

Action	Status
Raise funds to maintain a Housing Specialist position which can provide direct hands-on support to developers	
Continue to support Marquette County Emerging Developer Meetups	
Provide developer resources on www.housingnow906.org	
Work with partners to develop and implement a local "Build my Community" training program for small-scale developers	



SKILLED TRADES

Building a robust pipeline of skilled trades requires coordinated educational opportunities, community agreement on the importance of skilled trades, and an active pipeline of projects to provide reliable work. Through these efforts, Housing Now will seek to support the maintenance of our skilled trades pipeline in the region to provide necessary labor for housing development.

Action	Status
Create opportunities for high school trades programs to introduce students to home building	
Support the Marquette County Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee's efforts	
Work with the U.P. Construction Council to support the ongoing training of labor	

CAPITAL ACCESS



Providing various options of capital to finance housing projects allows different forms of housing to be developed throughout the county. Through its work, Housing Now will support the creation and maintenance of various financing tools and options for housing development in Marquette County.

Action	Status
Remain informed of existing and new state funding programs	
Provide direct support to apply for grants or other state resources	
Work with local governments to establish clear guidelines and processes for local tools such as brownfields and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	
Create a housing developer online toolkit on the Housing Now website	
Increase awareness of the Build UP housing fund	
Explore creation of a locally guided Impact Fund to support housing projects	
Bring together local finance institutions to increase comfort with innovative housing projects	



INNOVATION

While labor, materials, and financing tools will make some housing possible, Housing Now understands that we must also explore innovative housing types, construction processes, and policies that create more diversity, lower costs, and reduce build time for new units.

Action	Status
Remain informed on emerging building technologies and processes	
Connect local builders, developers, policy makers, and community leaders to those exploring innovative housing development processes	
Encourage healthy competition in the marketplace to foster innovation and process improvements	
Share information actively on social media and other channels spreading awareness on different models and ways to build housing	

OUR PARTNERS' WORK

As outlined under Goal #1 above, we recognize the work of our partners and will continue to work with them directly whenever possible to maximize our collective impact. Key activities our partners are currently engaged in which can complement our work are below. This is not an exhaustive list and will evolve over time.

Partner	Key Activities
Marquette County Land Bank Authority: The MCLBA is pursuing innovative solutions to repurposing land within its authority to address the housing crisis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blight and Demolition work throughout Marquette County Redevelopment of MCLBA properties to housing Employ Marquette County Housing Specialist

InvestUP: As the regional economic development organization, InvestUP has unique insight into the housing market and has an ability to bring out-of-the-area developers to Marquette County. They are also able to add significant influence at the state level to help bring additional resources.

- BuildUP Housing Development Fund
- Ongoing support for large scale (50+ units) developments

NMU / NMU Foundation: NMU and the NMU Foundation are able to leverage their strong network and interest in continuing to make Marquette a community that alumni can be proud of and someday move back to. They have brought capacity to a major redevelopment project which otherwise may have been much more difficult, which should add hundreds of units of housing to the area.

- NMU-F: Redevelopment of old [Marquette General Hospital Site](#) which is expected to include significant housing opportunities
- NMU: Adding additional student housing opportunities

Local Governments: All levels of local governments in Marquette County (townships, cities, and the county) have a role to play in reviewing and approving new housing development. Ensuring they have sufficient resources to expeditiously conduct their review and that they are operating with modern zoning and best practices for a collaborative regulatory process is essential to facilitating the rest of the work referenced in this strategy framework.

- Review and approval of housing projects
- Consideration and awarding of local incentives to support new housing developments
- Maintaining updated zoning and master plans

Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (CUPPAD): CUPPAD provides regional level data and planning and has historically played an important role in economic development planning, including housing strategies such as the county-level housing assessments in 2020. They are working with CAAM to co-lead the regional housing plan development effort.

- Ongoing maintenance and implementation of the Regional Housing Plan for Region B
- Update of comprehensive economic development strategy ([CEDS](#))

Community Action Alger Marquette (CAAM): CAAM provides resources to address homelessness, housing rehabilitation, weatherization, and more. They also serve as the Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) for 14 counties in the upper peninsula. Alongside CUPPAD, CAAM is co-leading development of the central upper peninsula regional housing plan (RHP).

- Ongoing maintenance and implementation of the Regional Housing Plan for Region B
- Operation of programs for homelessness, veterans, housing stability, and more

Habitat for Humanity of Marquette County: Habitat for Humanity continually provides opportunities to build new housing developments on a small-scale which are designed to be affordable to families in the workforce. Habitat has worked with local governments to redevelop sites as well as with the MCLBA.

- Continued development of low-cost housing affordable to families in the workforce

Marquette Housing Commission: Marquette Housing Commission is chartered under the laws of the State of Michigan to provide and administer affordable housing programs for the citizens of Marquette. The MHC provides two hundred and fifty-seven affordable, pet friendly apartments at two locations within the city of Marquette.

- Continued operation of existing affordable housing operations

Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC): While MEDC’s involvement in housing has historically been limited to mixed-use development in downtown areas, the MEDC has gradually moved to redirect resources to additional housing opportunities which meet community needs. Many of their technical assistance tools are beneficial to our efforts to build housing.

- [Emerging developer toolkit](#)
- Housing financial incentives
- Emerging developer roadshows

Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA): MSHDA provides financial and technical assistance through public and private partnerships to create and preserve safe and decent affordable housing, engage in community economic development activities, develop vibrant cities, towns and villages, and address homeless issues. MSHDA adopted the first-ever statewide housing plan in 2022 and is working to implement it on a regional level. They have also been provided with new tools, such as the Missing Middle Housing funds, to spur rehabilitation and new development.

- Implementation of the [Statewide Housing Plan](#)
- Tools for homeowners, renters, and developers

Great Lakes Housing Services (GLHS): A nonprofit organization that has existed for a while, GLHS really took off in 2024 as MSHDA worked to build up local technical support for housing projects across the state.

- Direct technical services to local governments and developers

REPORTING ON THE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Strategy Frameworks are designed to be flexible and updated regularly based on new progress, resources, and external factors. Progress on this framework will be reported to the LSCP Board of Directors approximately every six months as well as to the general LSCP membership at the annual meeting (typically April). Quarterly updates will be provided to the Housing Now Leadership Council as well. Priority items will be identified each quarter at leadership meetings. Data collected as part of the LSCP strategic plan around housing development will be used to gauge the success of this strategy as well as qualitative feedback and information.